

REMARKS

The present application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 9, 2007. Claims 1, 2 and 4-17 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 10, and 11 are in independent form. Claims 1 and 10-11 have been amended to better define the invention, and Claim 3 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein. Claims 12-17 have been added to provide Applicants with a more complete scope of protection. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The Office Action states that Claim 1 is rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,050,986 (*Vance et al.*), in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0126033 (*Evans et al.*); and that Claims 10-11 are rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,050,986 (*Vance et al.*), in view of *Evans et al.* and Business Wire Article entitled “American Express Expands Roundtrip Services with Array of New Products and Services” and further in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0126033 (*Business Wire*).

Applicants submit that independent Claims 1, 10 and 11, together with the claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons. Should issues remain following a careful consideration of the present amendment, the courtesy of a telephone interview to provide clarification concerning those issues and discuss possible claim language to address the issues is respectfully requested.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is directed to a computer-implemented method for facilitating an automated redemption of an unused

ticket via a computer system. The method includes setting an aging period and identifying a scheduled date of an issued ticket. The method further includes adding the aging period to the scheduled date and determining at the schedule date plus the aging period whether the issued ticket has been used. If the ticket has not been used, the issued ticket is identified as an unused ticket and a ticket status field in a table is set. In addition, a redemption value of the unused ticket is calculated and a redemption value field in the table is set. Further, a report based on the table is generated and transmitted to a client travel agency and/or a client of the unused ticket.

Applicants point to Claim 1, which recites “identifying the issued ticket as an unused ticket and setting a ticket status field in a table; calculating, via a computer system, a redemption value of the unused ticket and setting a redemption value field in the table; generating a report based on the table; and transmitting the report to at least one of a client travel agency and a client of the unused ticket.” By virtue of these features, the invention tracks pending and unused tickets and facilitates their use or redemption for value by or on behalf of a traveler or a traveler’s employer. An advantage it has over previous systems is that unused tickets are automatically identified and the traveler and/or the traveler’s employer are notified of any unused tickets and potential redemption values without requiring any further action by them.

As understood by the Applicants, *Vance et al.* relates to a corporate travel planning, expense reporting and travel management system. As conceded by the Examiner on page 3 of the Office Action, *Vance et al.* fails to disclose “adding, via a computer system, the aging period to the scheduled date and, if the scheduled date plus the aging period is earlier than a current date, determining, via a computer system,

whether the ticket has been used; if the ticket has not been used, identifying the ticket as an unused ticket; and calculating, via a computer system, a redemption value of the ticket.” Applicants agree with the Examiner that *Vance* is deficient of these features and further submit that nothing that has been found in *Vance et al.* that would teach, suggest or otherwise result in “if the ticket has not been used, identifying the issued ticket as an unused ticket and setting a ticket status field in a table; calculating...a redemption value of the unused ticket and setting a redemption value field in the table; and generating a report based on the table; and transmitting the report to at least one of a client travel agency and a client of the unused ticket,” as recited in Claim 1.

Applicants further submit that *Evans et al.* fails to remedy the deficiencies of *Vance*. As understood by the Applicants, *Evans et al.* relates to a system and method of identifying electronically distributed software after distribution, determining a value of a refund and processing the refund. Apparently, the *Evans et al.* system calculates the redemption value of electronically distributed software that has been returned. Nothing has been found in *Evans et al.* that suggests, teaches or otherwise results in “generating” and “transmitting” a report upon “determining at [a] scheduled date plus [an] aging period whether the issued ticket has been used,” as recited in Claim 1. Instead, only “after a notice of return including a proof of purchase is received” is a value of a refund for the return determined and a refund processed. *See e.g.*, Abstract and paragraph 282. This is in stark contrast to the automated redemption of an unused ticket accomplished by performing the “identifying,” and [report] “generating” and “transmitting” steps recited in Claim 1, which occur without operator interaction.

Applicants submit that a combination of *Vance et al.* and *Evans et al.*, assuming that such a combination would even be permissible, would fail to teach, suggest, or otherwise result in the features described above with respect to Claim 1. At best, it would be a program that would check a database and expense report, and then notify a customer of tickets that have not shown up on an expense report or which have not been refunded as well as the redemption value of those tickets upon manual handling. It would not automatically keep track of all unused tickets, calculate potential redemption values and then notify a customer of their potential redemption values.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 1 is patentable over the cited art, and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Independent Claims 10 and 11 are computer system and computer product claims corresponding to Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything that, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as applied against the independent claims herein. Therefore, those claims are respectfully submitted to be patentable over the art of record.

Dependent Claims 2, 4-9 and 12-17 depend from one or another of independent Claims 1, 10 and 11 as discussed above and, therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

This Amendment After Final Action is believed clearly to place the present application in condition for allowance. Therefore, entry of this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 is believed proper and is respectfully requested, as an earnest effort to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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